

GREEK NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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**Press Release:**

**Regarding the recurring sea tragedies in the Mediterranean (20.4.2015)**

The Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR), an independent advisory body to the Greek State for the protection of Human Rights, would like to express, once again, its deep concern regarding the recurring sea tragedies and the loss of human lives in the Mediterranean.

Continuing insecurity in countries of origin, which results in the increase of the flows, impose the need for revision of EU policy. In this respect, it should be taken into consideration that the respect of human life and dignity as well as the respect of the non-refoulement principle for persons in need or potentially in need of protection is a binding obligation under international and European law, not merely for Greece but also for every European State.

In this context, GNCHR has stressed the need for more **solidarity** and **responsibility-sharing among EU Member States**. In view of the growing migration flow, it is not merely by providing financial assistance to Greece that the EU will fulfill its primary duty to protect human rights. The EU asylum system must be re-designed and focus on human dignity and rights – not merely on ways to stockpile human beings in some Member States.

The Resolution of the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI, January 2014), of which GNCHR is a member, should also be underlined. ENNHRI calls on **the EU institutions and Member States to take urgent action regarding the Syrian refugee crisis, in particular for the immediate application of the EU Directive on Temporary Protection and coordinated action for enhanced sea rescue and individual evaluation of refugees**.